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CIRCULAR

OF THE

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,

OF

LOUISIANA,

NATCHITOCHES, LA., 1885-'86.

CIRCULAR

OF THE

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL OF LOUISIANA,

AT

NATCHITOCHES, LA.,

AND

Rules Governing the Admission of Students,

THEIR PROMOTION, GRADUATION, ETC.

1885-1886.

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Several professors will be elected to the Faculty before the beginning of the Fall Term, and thereafter whenever the growth of the School may require additional instructors.

By an Act of the Legislature of the Commonwealth of Louisiana, there has been established a State Normal School in the town of Natchitoches. In the eyes of all friends of education, this act reflects honor upon those who, by their intelligence and their perseverance, have secured to the State an institution which is calculated to become a fountain of endless good. The citizens of this State are to be congratulated on the occasion of this opening of their first State Normal School. It is an event which well deserves to be commented upon, because it is born in the morning of that new era of prosperity which is dawning upon the Southern States of our common country; and, moreover, it deserves to be celebrated because it is the beginning of a work of love, which will extend into the distant future "building for the children" and the generations that are yet to come. And, furthermore, it is an event which is born in the spirit of the "New Education,"—that spirit which is unwilling to intrust the guidance of our children to others than efficient and carefully trained teachers who are qualified to assume the responsibility of their moral and mental development.

Institutions of this kind cannot effect startling revolutions. But their work, like our good deeds, is far reaching and lasting. It will, therefore, not appear inappropriate if, at the time when the first Normal School of the State is about to throw open its doors for the admission of students, a few words are added to illustrate the peculiar mission which it comes to perform.

It seeks to prepare efficient teachers for the Public Schools of the State. Should it really become necessary so late in the present century to offer arguments in favor of education! Still there are men who, even at this late day, have failed to learn that they can leave to their children no more valuable a legacy than a liberal education.

And there remains an even larger class of men which believes to have performed its whole duty when it has placed its children at school.

But there are few who do not at some time sincerely wish to see their children grow up intelligent and moral men and

women. To attain this object is the *true aim of education.* Certainly the realization of such a hope must remain highly problematic so long as the education of children is intrusted to incapable, ignorant and often times immoral teachers.

But whence is the State to take efficient teachers so long as it does not afford the means for their training?

The position which the Normal School holds among other institutions of learning is clearly defined. It is neither a high school nor a college. It is a professional school, in the same sense in which the Departments of Medicine and Law, in the Universities, are professional schools. And it is highly important that this true relation of the Normal School to other institutions should be borne in mind, lest its association with the High School lead to a confusion of ideas, and prevent the accomplishment of that purpose for which it has been created.

Teaching is an art, and practice in teaching must, therefore, constitute an important feature of Normal School training. But such exercises in teaching are of real value only, if they are conducted in the class-room and under the supervision of competent professors. It, therefore, becomes the duty of the Normal School to supply a "practice school" in which its students may teach in accordance with those principles and methods with which they have been made acquainted.

But teaching is an art only in so far as it becomes the practical exponent of recognized principles. If the object of education is the development of intelligent and moral men and women, and if the possibility of influencing the child's mind be admitted, then obviously the study of the principles of morality and of the laws of mental development must, during the entire course of his preparation, engage the attention of the Normal School student.

A character is not formed in a day, and there is no magic word by which an irresolute and evil-disposed person can be suddenly converted into a virtuous and self-reliant man or woman. Is there to be found a sadder story, or one that has elicited more bitter and more ineffectual tears than that which is daily rehearsed in the futile struggles of weak characters?

There is a tendency at the present day to supply the mind of the child with a knowledge of innumerable facts, and to intrust the formation of its character to the influences of accidental surroundings and to the committing to memory of a few pious verses. This is moral indifference, and moral indifference means moral ruin. A character will be formed, whether we direct the moulding of it or not. But that there will be a difference, if it has been completely guarded and developed, or if left exposed to conflicting and evil impressions, no one surely will venture to deny. Moral training has been seriously neglected because of a false notion that schools were intended to make girls and boys *smart* instead of making them *intelligent*, with strong wills that may enable them to do whatever their understanding tells them to be right.

But this end cannot be reached by adding "moral instruction" to the curriculum of studies. It can only be attained by placing the schools in charge of *moral*, *intelligent* and *capable* teachers.

At present few of our schools do more than supply the minds with a certain number of rules, dates, figures and facts, laboriously committed to memory, but very quickly forgotten when the class examinations have been concluded. The mind, like the stomach, as Montaigne would say, rejects this undigested food. It is the close association of studies, the bringing into intimate relation with each other, and the overflowing of the one into the other, which alone can prevent this disintegration and lead to intelligent thinking.

And, furthermore, what are termed methods, in so far as the expression means anything more than an arbitrary arrangement, signify nothing else but a careful preparation of the matter which is to be taught,—a preparation in accordance with the laws of mental development which will enable the child to comprehend without difficulty and will make it master of the ideas which we intend to convey.

Mental activity and, therefore, mental growth, proceeds in conformity with laws as immutable as those which govern all changes in nature. Unwilling to intrust their bodily welfare to the charge of an ignorant physician, we unhesitatingly place the mental and moral care of our children in the hands of educa-

tional quacks, permitting them to interfere rudely with the delicate machinery of the mind and to fill the world with mental cripples, and moral monstrosities.

And this condition of affairs must continue so long as we leave teachers to starve; so long as the false impression prevails that any one is sufficiently intelligent to teach school; so long as others than professionally trained men and women are admitted as teachers ; and so long as the means for obtaining this training are not supplied.

Such is the work to be performed by the Normal School. Those to whom its direction has been confided are not ignorant of the great responsibility which they assume, or unconscious of the days of toil, of disappointment, possibly of misinterpretation of their purest motives, which may be in store for them. But they are inspired by the thought of the great good which this institution is destined to work, and they look into the future without fear.

Believing that the Normal School is to become a source of endless blessings to this State, they unhesitatingly ask for it the confidence and the support of the people of Louisiana.

EDWARD E. SHEIB,
President.

General Information for Those Who Intend to Apply for Admission to the State Normal School.

ADMISSION.

Candidates for admission must present on the day of examination a satisfactory certificate of good moral character; must declare their intention of faithfully observing the regulations of the school and of continuing in the same during the time required for graduation, unless honorably discharged; must certify in writing their full intention of teaching in the Public Schools of Louisiana for at least one year after graduation, and must pass a satisfactory examination in Reading, Writing, English Grammar, Arithmetic, Geography and History of the United States.

No preparatory department is connected with the Normal School. Proficiency in the branches of study just enumerated will be required of all applicants for admission.

Examinations will be held during the third and fourth week of October at Natchitoches, and for the convenience of the residents of remote sections of the State, at accessible places yet to be named.

As a rule, no students will be admitted except at the beginning of the Fall Term.

Young ladies and young gentlemen who intend to apply for admission to the Normal School are requested at once to notify the President of their purpose.

FORM OF RECOMMENDATION.

To the President of the State Normal School:

I hereby recommend....., of....., in the Parish of....., as possessing the moral character, mental ability, scholarship and health requisite for an appointment to the State Normal School.

.....

Parish Commissioner of Schools.

.....,

Date,.....

THE SCHOOL YEAR.

The school year is divided into two terms, each containing twelve weeks. A new class is formed at the beginning of the Fall Term. At other times during the school year only such students will be admitted whose proficiency in the different studies will enable them to enter the regular classes.

The Fall term begins November 1st, 1885.
Ends January 31st, 1886.

The Spring term begins February 1st, 1886.
Ends April 30th, 1886.

The term ending April 30th, 1887, will close with public exercises of graduation.

SCHOOL SESSION.

Classes are held daily, except on Sundays, during the Christmas week, and on all thanksgiving and fast days authorized by the State or General Government.

The daily session begins at 9 o'clock in the morning and continues till 2:15 in the afternoon. A recess is taken at 10:45 A. M., and again at 12:45 P. M.

There are no recitations on Saturdays. The short Saturday session, which closes at 12 o'clock, noon, is devoted to lectures, discussions, conferences, the consideration of the work performed during the week, etc.

COURSE OF STUDY.

The following branches of study have been prescribed for the Normal School Course, extending over two years:

Review and methods of teaching,

Arithmetic, Geography, Grammar, Composition, Reading and Phonetics, History, Drawing, Penmanship, Spelling, Calisthenics and Music.

Literature, Natural Sciences, Hygienic Physiology.

Civil Government.

Philosophy of Education, History of Education, Science and Art of Teaching, Psychology, Ethics, Discipline and School Management.

Practical Teaching in the Practice School.

DISCIPLINE.

It is presumed that those who attend the Normal School wish to prepare to teach. All who do not purpose to devote themselves seriously to the study of this profession are advised to select some other pursuit. The authorities of the Normal School do not propose to resort to compulsion. They expect that students should govern themselves, refrain from all improprieties of conduct, comply cheerfully with the regulations of the Institution, and conform willingly to the known wishes of their professors.

Unladylike or ungentlemanly conduct will entail immediate expulsion from the school, and, under no circumstances, will a student, whom it may become necessary to dismiss, be re-admitted.

The faithful performance of their duties will be encouraged for its own sake and the dignity it lends to the character, and not in order that students may obtain marks of credit; therefore, no attempt will be made to excite a feeling of emulation,

and students will not be ranked according to their apparent success in their studies. Such attempts are antagonistic to the highest educational principles, and the employment of such means to ensure success would be all the more reprehensible in the preparation of those who are to become teachers.

AIMS OF THE SCHOOL.

The Normal School aims to prepare efficient teachers for the Public Schools of Louisiana. It strives to impart to its students a knowledge of the true principles of education and to make them familiar with the best methods of teaching, and it endeavors to communicate to them the Art of Teaching.

It seeks to prepare teachers who will be competent and self-reliant, trusting to their own abilities rather than to rules and text books.

It labors to develop in the students that moral force which will in turn be reflected in the characters of the children who will be intrusted to their guidance.

It endeavors to impress upon the student the conviction that in the exercise of this profession the teacher must not trust to accident: that a consciencious account must be rendered for every step taken or omitted, and that any neglect on the part of the teacher, whether it arise from ignorance or indifference, may result as unfortunate for the moral and mental development of the child as would carelessness and indolence on the part of a physician for its bodily health and well being.

METHODS.

During the entire Normal School course theory and practice go hand in hand. Familiarity with the pedagogical sciences and acquaintance with the best methods do not of themselves create good teachers. Those who have studied theory only, do not realize their helplessness until placed in charge of a class of children and requested to apply their theories to the particular cases which come under observation.

In order to secure trained teachers, capable of passing directly from the Normal School to the class room, daily exercises in teaching in the Practice School become necessary.

The exercises in the Practice School are conducted by one of the students in the presence of classmates and professors. All students are expected to take notes during the progress of these exercises, to be used for subsequent criticisms.

Careful preparation for each exercise in the Practice School is required. An outline of such a preparation must be in writing and is submitted to the professor in charge of the Practice School, before the exercise can be held.

These carefully directed exercises in teaching, form an important part of the Normal School work. They quickly acquaint the student with the art of teaching and school management.

The "Critique," which is held two or three times in each week, has a three-fold purpose: The encouragement of self-observation, the correction of mistakes made in the Practice School, and the detection of all departures from what have been recognized as the true principles and methods of teaching.

A part of the Normal School building is used for the accommodation of the Practice School. The course of studies prescribed for the children attending this school is similar to that followed in the elementary schools of the State.

Attention is given to the construction of simple and inexpensive apparatus for the illustration of Physics, Geometry, Object Lesson, etc.

PROMOTION.

Students are promoted from one class to another, at the close of a term, after careful examinations, oral and written, in all the studies pursued during that term.

At the close of the two-years' term they are examined in the studies taught in the Public Schools of the State. After passing a satisfactory examination in these branches and in the different studies of the Normal School, they are permitted to graduate.

A diploma of graduation from the State Normal School entitles the recipient to the enjoyment of all the privileges which are extended to those holding Teachers' Certificates. Preference will be given to Normal School graduates in all appointments of teachers.

EXPENSES, ETC.

Tuition is free. At present text books are not furnished by the Institution.

Students should bring with them, for the purpose of reference and comparison, the text books which they have already studied, together with a Dictionary and an Atlas.

Furnished rooms and board may be obtained at from three to four dollars per week, and for even less when a number of students occupy one room.

Ladies and gentlemen do not board at the same houses.

A list of respectable families that are willing to receive students will be found in the President's office. No rooms must be engaged without his approval.

Students coming to Natchitoches by railroad procure tickets to Provencal Station on the Texas and Pacific Railroad. Conveyances from Natchitoches meet all trains at that station.

Those coming by boat stop either at Natchitoches or at Grand Ecore.

LOCATION.

The town of Natchitoches is centrally located; its surroundings are beautiful, and the climate exceptionally pleasant and healthy. The Normal School building is situated on a hill at a short distance from town, and commands an extensive view of the surrounding country. Attached to the building are about 150 acres of land which are being converted, as rapidly as possible, into a beautiful park. Building and grounds formerly belonged to the "Sisters of the Order of the Sacred Heart." The building is particularly well adapted to the purposes of a Normal School.

LIBRARY, MUSEUM, ETC.

The Board of Administrators will, each year, devote some part of the revenues of the institution to the acquisition of books for a Student's Reference Library.

A reading room will be opened on November 1st, 1885.

Philosophical apparatus, charts, books, and a museum containing collections, illustrating the various departments of science, are greatly needed.

Patriotic and philanthropic citizens of Louisiana and the friends of progress and education can confer a great benefit upon the Institution by making donations to its Library, Museum, Reading and Lecture rooms. To many of the generous exhibitors at the New Orleans Exposition, this appeal will not have been made in vain.

For all further information, address

DR. EDWARD E. SHEIB,
PRESIDENT.

LOUISIANA

State Normal School,

NATCHITOCHES, LA.

CATALOGUE FOR 1887-1888.

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR

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